



## **THE BENEFITS & CHALLENGES OF A STUDY ABROAD CONSORTIUM**

### **BENEFITS FROM A FACULTY PERSPECTIVE:**

1. Additional locations for offering courses. e.g. Antarctica, Tanzania.
2. Higher standards for course outcomes as faculty try to impress colleagues at other institutions; knowing that your course proposal has to pass muster at other institutions besides your own; some courses get returned to the home institution for further work before being accepted.
3. Some courses taught by faculty from two different institutions.
4. Student interaction with students from other institutions; often stay in contact for years after the course.
5. Comparing values and issues at other institutions gives a much better understanding of one's own institution.
6. Can help to drive campus centralization of study abroad efforts; no more lone rangers.
7. Assessment. If a course is repeated, faculty are required to show what they changed based on student feedback.
8. Taking consortium courses back to faculty at one's home institution encourages development of new courses on campus. Gives faculty additional ideas of what is possible.
9. Expertise of travel provider and ability to help in difficult situations can persuade faculty to offer courses because they know they have strong support in cases where things go awry; faculty see that having these services is worth the extra cost.
10. UMAIE Standards:
11. Number of days abroad
12. Suggested activities for free time
13. Preparation of faculty: shadowing, expertise in country; two faculty per course
14. Veteran travel provider and its support on the ground.

### **CHALLENGES FROM A FACULTY PERSPECTIVE**

1. Number of courses each member contributes.
2. Difficulty of enforcing consortium standards on faculty from diverse institutions.
3. Amount of free time for students.
4. Local faculty resent competition from UMAIE courses.
5. Initially getting faculty to buy into the UMAIE program.
6. Irritation at the amount of information required for each UMAIE course proposal.

### **BENEFITS FROM A STUDY ABROAD OFFICE PERSPECTIVE**

1. Allows us to offer programs to our students that we couldn't otherwise offer on our own; more opportunities for everyone—both students and faculty.
2. A cost efficient way to internationalize faculty, students, and curriculum—sharing resources with 6 other institutions.
3. The working relationship with a provider allows us to have many study abroad offerings while keeping the study abroad staff focused on working with faculty and students.
4. The collaboration with other institutions on a regular basis gives a small university the benefits of working in a large group: A group of professionals and faculty to share the work and expertise with.
5. More minds to think through best practices and develop policies and procedures with.

6. Study abroad office and other parts of the university are as involved in some ways as with our own courses—so we can ensure academic integrity of the credit we're granting.
7. UMAIE standards, criteria and best practices give the study abroad office more weight in terms of our policies and evaluation of course proposals.
8. I have the backing of a "board of directors" when I have to say "no" to a faculty member.

#### **CHALLENGES FROM A STUDY ABROAD OFFICE PERSPECTIVE**

1. Requires juggling multiple interests and sometimes competing needs in order for the benefits of the consortium AND the benefits to the university to be realized.
2. Institutional policies differ across campuses: need to negotiate and formulate consistency when institutional policies and/or cultures differ.
3. Faculty need continual updating on what UMAIE is and how a consortium like this functions, what role the study abroad office plays and what role the provider has; who their students will be; what policies and practices take precedence for them.
4. An outside Board is reviewing and approving courses that our faculty are teaching for our institution. That's a delicate subject and one that has generated questioning.
5. Who gets contacted in emergencies? Not always clear, so study abroad offices on all campuses need to be in touch with each other.
6. Students can be confused as to whose course they're enrolling in—and also what policies (academic and conduct) they're responsible to.
7. The UMAIE Board is a volunteer position, which requires additional time and work for a small office.

#### **BENEFITS FROM A PROVIDER PERSPECTIVE:**

1. Annually working with 20-30 courses offered worldwide that usually fill to capacity.
2. Ability to provide cost savings with larger numbers than with independent campuses offering study abroad courses that may enroll only 10 or less.
3. Working with consistent logistical standards, emergency protocol and registration process across all courses.
4. All students carry the same negotiated medical and emergency evacuation insurance plan in case of a medical emergency, natural disaster or political emergency.
5. Working in new destinations requested by faculty and developing new partners across the globe.
6. Partnering with a consortium that for 45 years has strived to use the changing best practices from each campus to ensure cost effective, academic rigor and transformative intercultural experiences.
7. Attraction for faculty to propose a consortium course because of better assurance the course will fill and faculty will have the logistics support of an international provider.
8. Evaluation process is thorough providing feedback from faculty, students and study abroad offices on ways to improve for programming and processes for future course offerings.
9. Campuses join and depart the consortium for many different reasons such as no longer offering a J-Term but the consortium continues.

#### **CHALLENGES FROM A PROVIDER PERSPECTIVE:**

1. With students participating from several campuses, offering embedded programs is prohibitive.
2. This consortium requires 20 days in international destinations; program costs can be excessive compared to independent campus programs that do not have the same requirements.
3. The natural challenge of getting different campuses with different traditions, cultures and histories to work effectively together.
4. Providing the needed administrative support as the hub of communication between each campus's study abroad office, faculty and student.